Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend Claims 1 and 5. The Claim Listing below will replace all prior versions of the claims in the application:

Claim Listing:

1. (Currently amended) A method for processing network layer messages within a wireless communication system, the network layer including within it certain functional layers, including a radio resource function, a mobility management function, and a connection management function with at least the radio resource function being normally assumed to be a transport mechanism for the mobility management and connection management functions, the method comprising the steps of:

examining a network layer message to determine, prior to routing it to any functional layer, whether it is associated with connection management, mobility management, or radio resource management; and

routing the message directly to the respective connection management, mobility management, or radio resource management functional layer, directly and without passing the message between through each of the functional layers.

- 2. (Original) A method as in claim 1 wherein the steps of examining and routing the message are performed within a network layer thread as the message is first received by the network layer.
- 3. (Original) A method as in claim 1 wherein the steps of examining and routing the message are performed within a lower layer layer thread as the message is passed up to the network layer by the lower layer.
- 4. (Original) A method as in claim 1 wherein the step of examining only processes messages traveling in an uplink direction from a mobile station towards network subsystem components.

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5. (Currently amended) A method as in claim 4 additionally comprising the step of:

for messages traveling in a downlink direction from network subsystem
components towards the mobile station;

processing downlink network layer messages in a direct manner such that the network layer messages do not step pass through other layer protocol stacks.

(Original) A method as in claim 5 additionally comprising the step of directly routing network layer messages that do not require acknowledgment.

(Original) A method as in claim 5 wherein downlink network layer messages that comprise connection management messages are first routed to the mobility management function.

(Original) A method as in claim 3 wherein network layer messages that comprise mobility management messages are first routed to the radio resource function.

- 9. (Original) A method as in claim 1 wherein the steps of examining a network layer message and routing the message directly to the respective functional layer are performed in a subsystem incorporating Base Transceiver System (BTS), Base Station Controller (BSC), and Mobile Switching Center Subsystems (MSC).
- 10. (Original) A method as in claim 1 wherein the steps of examining the network layer message and routing the message directly to the respective functional layer are performed in a mobile station (MS).

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